

Regional Homelessness: Diversion and Prevention Category

The purpose of this document is to offer a range of actions communities can consider as they participate in the regional response to homelessness. Additional refinement to these tactics will include measurable outcomes and the identification of possible funding sources and partners as the action plan is developed, refined with stakeholder input, and offered for action in the fall of 2021.

The document includes both strategies and draft tactics for consideration. The strategies were adopted by the MAG Regional Council on May 26, 2021, with additional support from the MAG Management Committee, the MAG Human Services Community Initiatives Committee, and the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care Board. Local providers and key stakeholders participated in weekly strategy sessions to propose the following draft “tactics” (next steps) as options for implementing each strategy. These tactics will be reviewed at the June 10 Capstone Event and further refined with continued, collaborative stakeholder input.

As the draft tactics are reviewed, please consider the following questions:

- Which of these tactics are underway now?
- Which resonate the most with you?
- How might you help move these tactics forward?
- What are we missing?

Lead agencies are noted as applicable for each strategy when the work is already underway. If the work is not yet underway, lead agencies will be identified as part of the process to develop the action plan.

| Strategy/Lead | Potential Tactics |
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| Coordinate and Expand Regional Homelessness Prevention Efforts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use funding sources such as COVID-19 relief funding and others to pilot innovative approaches to prevention, such as rapidly available flexible funding (available without a waitlist; flexible in eligible costs and spending limits). |

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- Build an **implementation hub** to centralize and coordinate prevention program administration, policies and procedures, eligibility criteria, data collection, and evaluation.
- Establish **standardized performance metrics** to measure success in prevention, and an agreed-upon platform, such as HMIS, for administering prevention data. Use these performance metrics to assess the success of innovative approaches.
- Expand the regional **definition of prevention** to include services that are ongoing and address the underlying systemic issues that lead individuals to homelessness (such as behavioral health support, family unification, etc.).
- Identify opportunities to **weave prevention and diversion interventions throughout the continuum of services**, not just at entry points. Consider partnerships with organizations outside of the traditional homeless system (e.g., high school homeless prevention coordinators, Phoenix Dream Center, Thrive Foster Care Prevention).
- Build **regional leadership capacity** to advocate for policy changes, identify sources of flexible funding, braid funding that already exists, standardize eligibility rules, and propose programmatic changes to enable the region to provide more flexible and responsive prevention and diversion resources.
- Develop an **inventory** of prevention programs operating across the region (such as faith-based resources, local community action programs (CAP), etc.). Identify the funding source for each resource and a coordinated process to triage clients to the most effective resource that meets their eligibility criteria.
- Encourage a **redesign of the rules for existing prevention programs** and processes to make the application and eligibility process more accessible. Focus on collecting the information necessary to determine eligibility and/or connect to other resources only.
- Coordinate the development and implementation of the regional homelessness prevention program with other priority strategies, including landlord engagement, employment support, and multisector coordination to **strengthen households' support systems** and financial sustainability.

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| <p>Coordinate and Expand Regional Homelessness Diversion Efforts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leverage funding sources such as COVID-19 relief funding and others to support flexible funding that can augment diversion strategies. Conduct an inventory of diversion resources across the region, including the funding source for each resource, effective protocols for referrals in line with eligibility, and opportunities to centralize resources to support swift deployment in line with urgency of diversion timeline.• As part of the Coordinated Entry System evaluation process and next steps, integrate diversion into the policies and procedures for CES administration in line with national best practices.• Develop regional metrics for measuring success in diversion through HMIS. Collect client stories, as well as return on investment documentation. Use these data to advocate with local and state funding sources to remove restrictions on funding and allow for a greater spectrum of services. Align with housing flexible funding pool policies and procedures to ensure access to flexible resources required for rapid resolution.• Establish a shared regional definition of diversion to include housing problem solving approaches and rapid resolution.• Develop a regional “Community of Practice” (CoP) for frontline staff in diversion programs. The CoP should include opportunities to build shared values, as well as trainings on best practices. Such as trauma-informed care, motivational interviewing, and strengths-based approaches. Introduce real-life case studies and have participants work through the scenarios together to gain insights from different organizations and to build trust among direct services staff across organizations and throughout the region.• Coordinate the development and implementation of the diversion strategy with other priority strategies, including the Coordinated Entry System evaluation, landlord engagement, and housing flexible funding pool. |
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